

Message Text

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 OTTAWA 00890

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SENV, CA, US
SUBJECT: LONG-RANGE TRANSPORT OF AIR POLLUTANTS

REF: STATE 242756, 275683

1. ON FEB. 22 EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICIAL (JOHN SHARPE, DIRECTOR U.S. TRANSBOUNDARY RELATIONS DIVISION, USA BUREAU) PROVIDED EMBOFF WITH LETTER RESPONSE TO U.S. PROPOSAL FOR BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS ON LONG-RANGE TRANSPORT OF AIR POLLUTANTS (LRTAP). TEXT APPEARS IN PARA 2. SHARPE STRESSED THAT PAPER SETTING OUT CANADIAN CONCERNS ON THIS TOPIC ENCLOSED WITH LETTER WAS ROUGH OUTLINE OF GOC THINKING AND NOT INCLUSIVE. SHARPE SAID GOC WAS WILLING TO MEET AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS QUESTIONS RELATED TO BILATERAL COORDINATION OF LRTAP RESEARCH ACTIVITIES. CANADIAN RESPONSE INCLUDES PROPOSED DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SUCH TALKS.

2. TEXT OF BODY OF LETTER AND WRITTEN ATTACHMENTS FOLLOWS (ENTIRE RESPONSE INCLUDING MAP ATTACHMENTS BEING POUCHED EUR/CAN): QUOTE. ON OCTOBER 19, 1977, YOU INFORMED US OF THE CONCERNS OF YOUR GOVERNMENT
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ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF LONG-RANGE TRANSPORT OF AIR POLLUTANTS (LRTAP) ON CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES AND YOUR GOVERNMENT'S WILLINGNESS TO INITIATE CONSULTATIONS ON THIS IMPORTANT QUESTION. YOU ALSO REQUESTED AN INDICATION FROM US ON THE NATURE OF CANADIAN CONCERNS ABOUT LRTAP AND MORE SPECIFICALLY THE U.S. COAL CONVERSION PROGRAM. AT THAT TIME, I EXPRESSED INTEREST IN

YOUR SUGGESTIONS AND SAID WE WOULD GIVE THEM CAREFUL CONSIDERATION.

"YOU SUBSEQUENTLY SOUGHT OUR VIEWS ON A POSSIBLE MEETING, HOSTED BY EPA, OF APPROPRIATE DFE AND EPA OFFICIALS FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSIDERING VARIOUS QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE BILATERAL COORDINATION OF LRTAP RESEARCH ACTIVITIES.

"WE HAVE NOW COMPLETED INTERDEPARTMENTAL CONSIDERATION OF YOUR PROPOSALS AND WISH TO INFORM YOU OF OUR CONCLUSIONS. IN GENERAL, THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA SHARES YOUR GOVERNMENT'S CONCERNS ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF LRTAP. FURTHER, WE AGREE THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO INITIATE CONSULTATIONS ON BILATERAL APPROACHES TO DEALING WITH THIS PROBLEM. WE BELIEVE THAT APPROPRIATE PREPARATORY WORK FOR SUCH CONSULTATIONS COULD BE DONE THROUGH THE FORMATION OF A CANADA-U.S. RESEARCH CONSULTATION GROUP FOR LRTAP.

"IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SUCH A GROUP WE HAVE DEVELOPED DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE WHICH WE ATTACH FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION. WE BELIEVE THAT THE PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE PROVIDE THE NECESSARY LATITUDE TO ENABLE A BILATERAL RESEARCH CONSULTATION GROUP TO COORDINATE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN OUR TWO UNCLASSIFIED

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COUNTRIES IN AREAS WHERE A COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF LRTAP IS LACKING, BUT AT THE SAME TIME REMAIN RESPONSIVE TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF GOVERNMENTS ON MATTERS OF BILATERAL POLICY. WE ANTICIPATE THAT THE RESULTS OF DISCUSSIONS IN SUCH A GROUP COULD IN DUE COURSE PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR SUBSEQUENT POLICY CONSULTATIONS. POLICY CONSULTATIONS NEED NOT, OF COURSE, AWAIT OR BE BASED SOLELY UPON THE WORK OF A BILATERAL RESEARCH CONSULTATION GROUP.

"IF YOU SHOULD FIND THE DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE SATISFACTORY, WE WOULD PROPOSE THAT A FIRST MEETING OF THE GROUP TAKE PLACE AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE, PERHAPS AT THE EPA RESEARCH FACILITY IN NORTH CAROLINA AS YOU SUGGESTED.

"WHILE WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE YOU WITH A DEFINITIVE AND CATEGORICAL DESCRIPTION OF CANADIAN CONCERNS ON LRTAP AND THE U.S. COAL CONVERSION PROGRAM, WE WOULD WISH AT THIS TIME TO PROVIDE YOU WITH A COPY OF A BRIEF PAPER (ATTACHED) WHICH SETS OUT IN GENERAL TERMS CANADIAN VIEWS ON THESE QUESTIONS. I WOULD

STRESS THAT THIS PAPER IS VERY MUCH AN OUTLINE OF
CURRENT CANADIAN THINKING AND DOES NOT REPRESENT A
FORMAL EXPRESSION OF CANADIAN CONCERNS.

"I LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING YOUR VIEWS ON THE PROPOSED
TERMS OF REFERENCE AT YOUR EARLY CONVENIENCE. END QUOTE.
QUOTE. DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A CANADA-U.S.
RESEARCH CONSULTATION GROUP FOR THE LONG RANGE TRANS-
PORT OF AIR POLLUTANTS.

"RECOGNIZING THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF SCIENTIFIC

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PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH DEFINING THE CURRENT AND
POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION WHICH MAY BE
ATTRIBUTED TO THE LONG RANGE TRANSPORT OF AIR POLLUTANTS
AND THE TRANSBOUNDARY SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PHENOMENON,
IT IS PROPOSED THAT CANADA-U.S. COOPERATION IN THE
SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF LONG RANGE TRANSPORT BE FORMALIZED
THROUGH THE FORMATION OF A BILATERAL RESEARCH CONSUL-
TATION GROUP. THIS GROUP WOULD CONSULT ON RESEARCH
EFFORTS IN CANADA AND UNITED STATES AND FACILITATE A
FULL EXCHANGE OF TECHNICAL INFORMATION ON THE SUBJECT.
THIS SHOULD ENSURE THE INTERCOMPARABILITY OF DATA AND
THE MAXIMIZING OF RESOURCE UTILIZATION. THE PROPOSED
COMPOSITION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE BILATERAL
RESEARCH CONSULTATION GROUP FOLLOW:

"COMPOSITION. THE BILATERAL RESEARCH CONSULTATION GROUP
SHALL COMPRISE APPROPRIATE SCIENTIFIC AND ENGINEERING
REPRESENTATION FROM THE FOLLOWING CANADIAN AGENCIES.

- CHAIRMAN
- - FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENT/ATMOSPHERIC ENVIRONMENT
- SERVICE

- FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENT
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- - 1 REPRESENTATIVE FROM EACH OF ENVIRONMENTAL
- PROTECTION SERVICE, ATMOSPHERIC ENVIRONMENT
- SERVICE, ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SERVICE, AND
- FISHERIES AND MARINE SERVICE.
- AGRICULTURE
- - 1 REPRESENTATIVE
- NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE
- - 1 REPRESENTATIVE
- ENERGY, MINES AND RESOURCES
- - 1 REPRESENTATIVE

REPRESENTATIVES FROM SIMILAR AGENCIES IN THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE EXPECTED.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

THE BILATERAL RESEARCH COORDINATION GROUP SHALL HAVE THE FOLLOWING RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1. ANALYSIS OF CURRENTLY INSTITUTED PROGRAMS AND
 - THOSE UNDER DEVELOPMENT TO DETERMINE WHERE GAPS
 - MAY EXIST IN THE INFORMATION BASE RELATING TO
 - THE OCCURANCE AND EFFECTS OF LONG RANGE TRANS-
 - PORT OF AIR POLLUTANTS;
 - 2. PROMOTION OF THE MEASURES NECESSARY TO ENSURE
 - THE INTERCOMPARABILITY OF DATA GENERATED BY
 - PROGRAMS IN BOTH COUNTRIES;
 - 3. PROMOTION OF THE DISSEMINATION OF APPROPRIATE
 - DATA AND RESEARCH INFORMATION;
 - 4. TENDERING ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE
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- CANADIAN AND U.S. GOVERNMENTS THROUGH,
- DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND THE DEPART-
- MENT OF STATE WITH RESPECT TO MODIFICATION OF
- EXISTING RESEARCH PROGRAMS AND/OR DEVELOPMENT

- OF NEW RESEARCH PROGRAMS;
- 5. PREPARATION OF A YEARLY STATUS REPORT TO BOTH
- GOVERNMENTS AND OTHER REPORTS AS DEEMED
- NECESSARY.

IN FURTHERANCE OF THE FOREGOING, THE GROUP SHALL MEET AS DETERMINED BY THE TWO CHAIRMEN OR AT THE REQUEST OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS AND MAY RECOMMEND THE HOLDING OF SYMPOSIA OR WORKSHOPS TO ENCOURAGE THE DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH INFORMATION. END QUOTE.

QUOTE. LONG RANGE TRANSPORT OF AIR POLLUTANTS. A BRIEF DISCUSSION ON CANADIAN CONCERNS.

"THE FOLLOWING DISCUSSION PRESENTS MATERIAL INDICATING THE GENERAL NATURE OF CANADIAN CONCERNS WITH RESPECT TO THE OCCURRENCE AND EFFECTS OF THE LONG RANGE TRANSPORT OF AIR POLLUTANTS. IT IS RECOGNIZED THAT THIS IS A SUB-CONTINENTAL SCALE PROBLEM INVOLVING SOURCES AND RECEPTORS IN BOTH CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES. IT IS BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THIS DISCUSSION TO PROVIDE A DETAILED LIST OF CANADIAN CONCERNS AND INDEED LACK OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION PRECLUDES THE PREPARATION OF SUCH A LIST.

"THE ELEMENTS OF A SERIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM RESULTING FROM THE LONG RANGE TRANSPORT OF AIR POLLUTANTS EXIST IN CANADA. SOUTHEASTERN CANADA HAS: SENSITIVE

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RECEPTORS, BOTH ECOLOGICAL AND HUMAN; A METEOROLOGICAL

REGIME CONDUCIVE TO THE TRANSPORT OF EMISSIONS FROM MAJOR SOURCE AREAS TO SENSITIVE RECEPTORS; AND CLOSE PROXIMITY TO MAJOR EMISSION SOURCES BOTH WITHIN CANADA AND THE U.S.

"IN LIGHT OF THE FINDINGS OF THE RECENT OECD STUDY ON LONG RANGE TRANSPORT OF AIR POLLUTANTS IN WESTERN EUROPE, THE MAGNITUDE OF EMISSIONS IN THE EASTERN HALF OF NORTH AMERICA AND THE METEOROLOGICAL REGIME PROVIDE CONVINCING PRESUMPTIVE EVIDENCE THAT THE LONG RANGE TRANSPORT OF A VARIETY OF POLLUTING SUBSTANCES SUCH AS SULPHUR COMPOUNDS, HEAVY METALS, SYNTHETIC ORGANICS, AND OTHER POLLUTANTS, IS UNDOUBTEDLY OCCURRING WITHIN AND INTO CANADA. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS DISCUSSION SPECIFIC COMMENT WILL BE LIMITED TO SULPHUR AND ITS RELATED COMPOUNDS. THIS SHOULD IN NO WAY, BE TAKEN AS A LACK OF CONCERN FOR OTHER POLLUTANTS. SULPHUR IS BEING USED AS A TYPICAL EXAMPLE BECAUSE MORE IS KNOWN ABOUT EMISSIONS, TRANSPORT, TRANSFORMATION, DEPOSITION AND EFFECTS OF SULPHUR COMPOUNDS THAN OTHER POLLUTANTS.

"THE ACIDITY OF PRECIPITATION IN EASTERN CANADA AND
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THE NORTHEASTERN U.S. IS KNOWN TO BE INCREASING. THIS IS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN BECAUSE OF THE MANY SENSITIVE RECEPTORS (LAKES AND FORESTS) IN THIS AREA WHICH ARE NOT UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ANY LARGE LOCAL EMISSION SOURCES. MAN MADE EMISSIONS OF SULPHUR DIOXIDE IN EASTERN NORTH AMERICA WERE ESTIMATED TO BE ABOUT 24 MILLION TONS PER YEAR IN 1976 (FIGURE 1). OF THIS, APPROXIMATELY 20 MILLION TONS WERE EMITTED FROM U.S. SOURCES. IN THE U.S. THE MAJORITY OF THESE EMISSIONS ARE FROM THE THERMAL POWER INDUSTRY. PROJECTED INCREASES IN EMISSIONS FROM THE U.S. UTILITY SECTOR VARY DEPENDING ON THE ASSUMPTIONS WHICH ARE MADE. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT INCREASED ENERGY DEMANDS IN THE U.S. COULD RESULT IN A 14-28 PERCENT INCREASE IN SULPHUR DIOXIDE EMISSIONS BY 1990 DEPENDING ON U.S. SO₂ REGULATORY POLICY AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ITS APPLICATION. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE RATE OF INCREASE IN SO₂ EMISSIONS CAN ONLY BE CURBED BY ENERGY CONSERVATION OR MORE STRINGENT EMISSION CONTROL. THE PROPOSED COAL SUBSTITUTION WOULD NOT CHANGE THE RATE OF INCREASE. THE IMPACT OF THE U.S. NATIONAL ENERGY PLAN IS DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERING OPINIONS AS TO THE POSSIBLE EXTENT OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

"IT MAY APPEAR THAT THE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE

SENSITIVE RECEPTOR AREAS IN EASTERN CANADA AND THE NORTHEASTERN U.S. WITH RESPECT TO THE MAJOR EMISSION SOURCES SHOULD NOT RESULT IN DISPROPORTIONATE DEPOSITION OF POLLUTANTS IN THESE AREAS. THE MEAN MOVEMENT OF AIR BETWEEN CANADA AND THE U.S. VARIES DURING THE YEAR (FIGURE 2). THE IMPORTANT FACT, HOWEVER, IS THE NET FLUX OF POLLUTANTS OVER THE SENSITIVE RECEPTOR AREAS. METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS FREQUENTLY RESULT IN MOVEMENT

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OF MOISTURE LADEN AIR MASSES FROM THE MAJOR U.S. EMISSION SOURCE AREAS INTO SOUTHEASTERN CANADA AND THE NORTHEASTERN U.S. IT IS THESE AIR MASSES WHICH PRODUCE THE MAJORITY OF PRECIPITATION IN EASTERN CANADA. SINCE PRECIPITATION IS THE MAJOR FACTOR IN THE DEPOSITION OF AIRBORNE POLLUTANTS, AIR MASSES WHICH ORIGINATE RESULT IN DISPROPORTIONATE DEPOSITION OF POLLUTANTS IN THE SENSITIVE RECEPTOR AREAS IN EASTERN CANADA AND THE NORTHEASTERN U.S. BY THE SAME TOKEN AIR MASSES FROM NORTHERN REGIONS ARE DRY AND PRODUCE RELATIVELY LITTLE PRECIPITATION. IN SUMMARY, THE NET FLUX OF POLLUTANTS IN EASTERN NORTH AMERICA IS FROM SOUTH TO NORTH.

"LARGE PORTIONS OF ONTARIO, QUEBEC AND PARTS OF THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES ARE UNDERLAIN BY NON-CALCAREOUS BEDROCK. THIS BEDROCK GEOLOGY RESULTS IN A LOW BUFFERING CAPACITY OF THE NUMEROUS FRESHWATER LAKES OF THE AREA WHICH SUPPORT A HIGHLY VALUED SPORTS FISHERY. POORLY BUFFERED SOILS OF THE REGION SUPPORT A MAINLY CONIFEROUS FOREST WHICH IS THE BASIS OF THE ECONOMICALLY VITAL FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY.

"DUE TO ITS LOW BUFFERING CAPACITY, THIS AREA IS MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO DAMAGE BY ACIDIFICATION. PRECIPITATION MORE ACID THAN NORMAL HAS BEEN OBSERVED TO BE OCCURRING OVER NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES AND EASTERN CANADA (FIGURE 3). INCREASES IN ACIDITY TO LEVELS ABOUT TEN TIMES THAT OF NATURAL RAIN NOW APPEAR TO BE NORMAL FOR THE AREA WHILE FOR INDIVIDUAL EVENTS ONE HUNDRED TIMES NORMAL ACIDITY HAVE BEEN OBSERVED.

"THIS INCREASED ACIDITY OF PRECIPITATION HAS ALREADY

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CAUSED ACIDITY CHANGES IN SOME LAKES IN CANADA AND THE
NORTHEASTERN U.S. TO THE EXTENT THAT FISH STOCKS HAVE
BEEN IMPAIRED OR ELIMINATED. CHANGES IN FOREST GROWTH
RATE HAVE NOT BEEN QUANTIFIED BUT EXPERIENCE IN
SCANDANAVIA WOULD INDICATE CAUSE FOR CONCERN. CONTINUED
OR INCREASED LEVELS OF ACIDITY IN PRECIPITATION WOULD
BE EXPECTED TO ACCELERATE THE RATE OF EXHAUSTION OF
THE REMAINING BUFFERING CAPACITY OF THESE RESOURCES,
VITAL TO THE SOCIETY AND ECONOMY OF CANADA.

"IN AUGUST 1976 AN INTENSIVE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED BY
FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENT CANADA TO SPECIFICALLY
EXAMINE THE SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL VARIATIONS IN
PARTICULATE SULPHATE AND PRECIPITATION COMPOSITION IN
EASTERN CANADA. THE MOST STRIKING RESULTS WERE THE
FREQUENT EPISODES OF ELEVATED TOTAL SUSPENDED PARTI-
CULATE AND SULPHATE LEVELS, AND THE LARGE GEOGRAPHICAL
EXTENT OF EPISODES. FIGURE 4 SHOWS BACK TRAJECTORY
CALCULATIONS OF AIR PARCELS FOR 4 STATIONS IN EASTERN
CANADA. THESE CALCULATIONS SHOWED THAT EPISODES OF
HIGH SULPHATE CONCENTRATIONS OCCURRED WHEN AIR MASSES
HAD PREVIOUSLY PASSED THROUGH REGIONS OF MAJOR SULPHUR
DIOXIDE EMISSIONS. BY CONTRAST THE DAYS WHEN MINIMUM
LEVELS OCCURRED CORRESPONDED TO AIR MASSES THAT HAD
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NOT TRAVERSED HEAVILY INDUSTRIALIZED AREAS. WHILE
THIS STUDY MAY BE CONSIDERED PRELIMINARY IN NATURE,
THE RESULTS SERVE TO INDICATE THE POTENTIAL MAGNITUDE
OF THE PROBLEM AND THE FACT THAT U.S. EMISSIONS ARE
A MAJOR INFLUENCING FACTOR. PARTICULATE SULPHATES
HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED IN U.S. EPA STUDIES AS A POTENTIAL
HAZARD TO HUMAN HEALTH. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE

LOWER GREAT LAKES - ST. LAWRENCE VALLEY REGION IS THE AREA OF GREATEST CANADIAN POPULATION DENSITY WITH APPROXIMATELY 50 PERCENT OF THE NATION'S POPULATION.

"WHILE SPECIFIC COMMENT HAS BEEN LIMITED TO SULPHUR COMPOUNDS, THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT LONG RANGE TRANSPORT OF PHOTOCHEMICAL OXIDANTS AND PRECURSORS, HEAVY METALS, FINE PARTICULATES, SYNTHETIC ORGANICS, AND OTHER POLLUTANTS MAY ALSO OCCUR. PRELIMINARY STUDIES UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION, GREAT LAKES WATER QUALITY BOARD HAVE PROVIDED QUANTITATIVE ESTIMATES THAT THE ATMOSPHERIC TRANSPORT AND DEPOSITION OF TOXIC METALS SUCH AS LEAD AND CADMIUM AND ORGANIC CONTAMINANTS SUCH AS PCB'S ARE SIGNIFICANT THROUGHOUT THE GREAT LAKES BASIN REGIONS OF CANADA AND UNITED STATES. IT IS TO BE EXPECTED THAT SUCH DEPOSITION OCCURS OVER MUCH WIDER AREAS OF CANADA.

"EXPERIENCE IN SCANDANAVIA HAS SHOWN THE DIFFICULTIES OF DOCUMENTING DAMAGE AND IN PURSUING LONG RANGE TRANSPORT CONTROL STRATEGIES. RECOGNIZING THESE PROBLEMS AND THE FACT THAT THE ELEMENTS OF A SERIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM RESULTING FROM THE LONG TRANSPORT OF AIR POLLUTANTS EXIST IN CANADA, FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENT CANADA IS EMBARKING ON A MONITORING AND RESEARCH PROGRAM. THIS PROGRAM WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION

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ON THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT NEEDED TO GUAGE THE IMPACT OF CURRENT EMISSIONS AND PROJECTED INCREASES. END QUOTE.

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